Permission for acquiring a full-fledged coal mine

*506. SHRI K.P.K. KUMARAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Tamil Nadu has sought on behalf of the State Electricity Board, permission of Central Government for acquiring a full-fledged coal mine in any coal bearing State for running the Thermal Power Plants in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether the Ministry of Coal would expedite the matter since this arrangement is expected to bring down the production coast of Thermal power in the State considerably; and

(c) whether it is a fact that a coal mine in the State of Orissa was earmarked for transfer to Tamil Nadu but the same was handed over to N.T.P.C at the last moment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of India is considering allocation of coal blocks in response to applications invited from State/Central PSUs under Government company dispensation route. The application of State electricity Board of Tamil Nadu is also being considered along with other applications.

(c) No, Sir.

Setting up of Internet Exchange at Ahmedabad/Gandhinagar

*507. SHRI JAYANTILAL BAROT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government of Gujarat has submitted any project for setting up of Internet Exchange at Ahmedabad/Gandhinagar; and

(b) if so, the present status of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMED): (a) and

(b) The State Government of Gujarat has requested for setting up Internet Exchange in Ahmedabad.

The Project has been approved by Department of Information Technology (DIT) and funds have been released.

Model Concession agreement to avoid delays and cost-overruns

*508. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether to avoid delays and cost overruns the NHAI is adopting a new model concession agreement;

(b) if so, what are the new clauses that have been introduced which can check the overruns;

(c) whether the new proposed concession clauses can expedite the languishing and pending highway projects in Andhra Pradesh;

(d) if so, the details of the projects that have been earmarked for completion in 2006-07 and have remained incomplete alongwith the total length of the roads to be laid; and

(e) the elaborate measures initiated to accelerate the work pertaining to pending projects during the last year?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The new Model Concession Agreement (MCA) is being adopted for Build, Operate & Transfer (BOT) projects where,

(i) cost overrun for project is not expected (except for change of scope, if any) as any cost overrun in the normal cause is to be absorbed by the concessionaire.

(ii) time overrun in project completion is also not expected (except for change of scope, if any) as the concessionaire has strong incentive to complete in time in order to gain benefit of tolling/ annuity payment which are entitled only upon completion of the project.